

CASE IV.—*Feb. 27th*, 1849. Mrs. —, of a nervous temperament, been in delicate health for some time; was suddenly seized without apparent cause, with pains in the loins and lower portion of the abdomen, quickly followed by considerable hemorrhage; became much alarmed; pulse small and quick. Skin bathed in cold perspiration; pains in the back and hypogastric region, intermittent. Says she menstruated on the first of January, menstruated again ten days previous to the present attack, lasted only two days. Prescribed the following. R.—*Argenti oxidi gr. vi*; *morph. acetat. gr. ̄*; *pulv. glycyrrh. q. s.* Divide in *pil. iij*, one pill to be taken immediately and repeated in half an hour. (My friend Dr. S. A. Hinton here took charge of this case. I am indebted to his kindness for the following report.)

I saw the case after she had taken two pills of the oxide of silver; the hemorrhage had greatly diminished; was quiet and tranquil. Ordered the third pill to be given. Saw her again at night; hemorrhage had almost entirely stopped; pain in the back and abdomen relieved. Discontinued the medicine.

*28th*. Bowels rather loose; complains of pain in the lower bowels, with slight tormina and tenesmus. Prescribed an opium pill, to be taken at bed-time.

*March 1st*. Slept well during the night; no pain in the bowels or back, scanty discharge from the vagina. Prescription, a small dose of Henry's magnesia.

*2d*. The discharge scarcely perceptible. Ordered rest, and a bland nourishment.

*3d*. Doing well.

ART. VII.—*Congenital Phimosis*. By M. G. DELANEY, M. D., Surgeon U. S. Navy.

CONGENITAL phimosis is a more common malformation than physicians in general practice are aware of.

In hospitals devoted to the treatment of venereal disease alone, many cases are met with. The best opportunity, however, for the observance of this defect is to be found in military practice; and particularly in that portion of it which includes the examination of recruits at a rendezvous. Within the space of two months I had examined and passed at the naval rendezvous in this city one hundred and seventeen men. Of these, twelve were affected with congenital phimosis; and all but two were impotent. All had attempted sexual union, but two only succeeded, according to their own statement, which, judging from appearances, I considered doubtful.

The feeling of amateness was so weak in these men, that they had essayed a connection with women rather from a sense of curiosity than passion. I have scarcely ever seen twelve men with more ample muscular developments in all parts save the organs of generation. The respective ages were: 1 of 28 years; 1 of 26; 1 of 24; 1 of 23; 4 of 22; 3 of 21, and 1 of 18 years.

The penis was invariably small, or the size of that of a boy of twelve years;

coronal gland very small, and prepuce opening but little larger in diameter than the meatus. The testes, from having been but rarely excited, corresponded in size with the penis. The want of sexual desire, or the existence of impotency in these cases, is manifestly owing to the phimosis. The coronal gland, being bound down by the prepuce, could neither receive the necessary nervous stimulus, nor expand to the capacity requisite for virile enjoyment; consequently, in the majority of cases, congenital phimosis begets, what it only can beget, impotency. This misfortune can only be remedied by a surgical operation. The congenital impotent is a different being, in appearance, from the one who is a poor victim of masturbation. In the former case you may have the finest form with the most perfect health—a health never broken in upon by erotic ideas or wasting excesses—the latter I need not describe to any practitioner;—its suicidal wretchedness is known to all.

Masturbation and congenital phimosis never exist together: they are, in a measure, physical incompatibles.

A moral question may obtrude itself, whether the surgeon is justifiable in remedying a malformation which is a safeguard to virtue, and a cloak of protection to its owner; but which, at the same time, renders him incapable of fulfilling the duties of the citizen, by marrying and raising up children.

The necessity of an operation is not so imperative in this case, as in its parallel, a closed vagina, where the functional disturbance incident to maturity demands a division of the hymen.

The Jewish rite of circumcision is founded in reason, and beneficial in result. It may be said that every part given to us by nature has its use; it is so in a state of nature: but in one of civilization, the use of the prepuce cannot be designated with more accuracy than that of the thyroid gland. In the islands of the Pacific only has the prepuce a conventional usefulness. There, the otherwise naked native considers himself in full dress when the prepuce is drawn tightly over the gland, and its end tied up with a fanciful bit of sennet, or coloured grass. The native would no sooner be seen in the presence of a woman with an uncovered gland, than would the civilized man without a shirt. There, then, and there only, does the prepuce subserve a material and fashionable purpose: which, however, gradually falls into disuse, in the progress of civilization.

I have had occasion, in many instances, to circumcise natives of the islands—those acting on board whale ships as sailors. The prepuce, in those cases, served as a cloak to venereal matter, as well as to modesty; and had to be sacrificed. The most disgusting case of venereal is that wherein the mucous coat of the prepuce is plentifully studded with chancre. In fact, the great mortality following venereal in the Pacific Islands is owing—notwithstanding the constant habit of bathing—to this tying up of the matter of discharging chancres, in the bag of the prepuce.

I would, therefore, recommend the adoption of the Jewish practice of circumcision upon all children—not as a religious ceremony, nor before the end

of the first year—but as a preventive, in a certain degree, of venereal disease: and, in the absence of personal abuse, as a removal of the cause of impotency. In three instances I have slit up the prepuce in adults, for the relief of impotency; and although the operation (as then practiced) left a flap neither ornamental nor useful, yet it subserved the main point; and in two of the cases the men became reputable husbands. The best mode of operation is that recommended and practiced by Ricord: which is a great improvement, not only upon the Jewish, but every other method. His method is as follows: “The penis is allowed to remain in its natural position, and no traction is used: a circular mark is made with ink upon the prepuce, about two lines anterior to the base of the glans, and parallel to the corona: a long and strong needle, its point covered with a wax head, is then introduced between the glans and prepuce, and made to pierce the whole thickness of the latter, on the mesial line, and a little in front of the circular mark. The mucous membrane and skin of the prepuce are thus fixed, and the needle is allowed to remain. Behind it, and in a longitudinal direction, a fenestrated forceps, with notched edges, is then firmly applied. The fenestræ of the instrument correspond to the circular mark and the glans; at this stage of the operation the latter is to be pushed backwards. The next step is to pass sutures, five or six in number, through the fenestræ; and when all the threads are applied, the prepuce is shaved off with a bistoury made to glide between the needle and forceps. The latter is then withdrawn carefully, so as not to disturb the ligatures. The assistant should be desired to press the forceps very tightly when the prepuce is being shaved off; if this be neglected, the prepuce will yield, and the sutures will be cut. When the forceps is removed, the arteries which are noticed to bleed, should be tied or subjected to torsion; the threads which pass above and below the glans are then divided in their centre, and the respective ends of each half resulting from this section are tied, to bring the mucous membrane in contact with the skin. Of course there will be twice as many sutures as there were threads passed.” Treatment—the usual cold water dressing. It might not be correct to say that ten out of every hundred men, as in the present instance, are affected with congenital phimosiis; but many are the unfortunate subjects of this malformation who live a single and unenviable life, without being able to fulfil the duties of men: and who, moreover, are deprived of that sympathy which other misfortunes elicit from our fellows by the secrecy which attaches to such cases. The operation upon the adult, though obviating impotency, yet does not visibly increase the bulk of the organ; which, compressed from infancy—unlike other parts of the body—had neither “grown with the growth, nor strengthened with the strength.”

The sum of human happiness and human numbers would be increased by the universal adoption of circumcision.